

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

Apparatus is disclosed for connecting at least a first Fibre Channel device to at least a second Fibre Channel device. The apparatus includes ports, buffers and bypass buffers that are arranged so that the second Fibre Channel device can operate at a physical link rate that is higher than the physical link rate of the first Fibre Channel device regardless of whether or not the first Fibre Channel device is sending data words to the second Fibre Channel device and regardless of whether or not the second Fibre Channel device is sending data words to the first Fibre Channel device.